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# **Sikkema: MEAP Move Makes Sense**

## *Leading Republicans Say Focus Should Be On Making Program Work*

LANSING – Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema and two key Republicans support Governor Jennifer Granholm’s plan to move administration of the Michigan Education Assessment Program to the Department of Education.

Sikkema, R-Wyoming, says the move out of the Department of Treasury, where the MEAP is currently managed, will allow the Granholm administration to correct problems which led to tremendous delays in releasing results of test scores taken by students during the 2002-03 school year.

“This move makes sense and will allow administration officials to focus on how to fix current problems instead of shifting blame to another department,” Sikkema said. “The MEAP is a major indicator of student and school district performance and we need this program to function as efficiently and effectively as possible.”

Sen. Wayne Kuipers, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, said several hearings his panel held in recent weeks also support the need to move the MEAP to the Department of Education.

“Parents, students and school districts cannot afford to wait for MEAP results like they did this year,” said Kuipers, R-Holland.

Sikkema also said Sen. Ron Jelinek, R-Three Oaks, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on K-12, School Aid and Education, supports the transfer.

The MEAP administers annual standardized tests for Michigan public school students. Results from those tests are used to gauge, in part, individual school district performance and to determine recipients of the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship program.

“Moving MEAP to the Department of Education will allow continued legislative oversight of the program and ensure that the delays that plagued the program this year are not repeated next year,” Sikkema said.